

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) In a method of producing a fused oxide body by decomposing a precursor compound of the oxide in a flame to form molten oxide particles that are collected to form a fused oxide body in a furnace constructed of a zircon refractory material, the improvement in the method comprising treating the zircon refractory material with a strong acid in liquid form to react with, and thereby remove, contaminants from at least the surface of the zircon refractory brick material.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the improvement comprises treating the zircon refractory brick material with an acid selected from the group consisting of nitric, hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids.
3. (previously presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the selected acid is hydrofluoric acid.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the improvement comprises treating the zircon refractory brick material in an acid bath maintained at a temperature in the range of 20-80° C.
5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~which comprises producing wherein the fused oxide body is~~ a fused silica body.
6. (deleted)
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 which comprises treating the zircon refractory brick material with an acid in liquid form either prior to or after a carbochlorination treatment.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7 1 which comprises treating the zircon refractory brick material with an acid in liquid form after a carbochlorination treatment.

9-14. (canceled)